

Oakland Army Base, Warehouse Type  
(Building Nos. 802-808)  
Tobruk Street, between Warehouse Road  
and 15th Street  
Oakland  
Alameda County  
California

HAER  
CAL  
I-DAK,  
12I-

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA**

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
Western Region  
Department of the Interior  
San Francisco, California 94107

# HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

## OAKLAND ARMY BASE, WAREHOUSES (Building Nos. 802-808)

HAER  
CAL  
1-OAK,  
12I-

HAER No. CA-125-I

**Location:** Tobruk Street, between Warehouse Road and 15th Street  
USGS Oakland West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator  
Coordinates: Northing 4184900, Easting 560150

**Dates of Construction:** The contractor's "Completion Report" notes that Buildings 802-805 were completed between November 11, 1941 and February 2, 1942. The Real Property Cards list June 1942 as the completion date for Buildings 806-808.

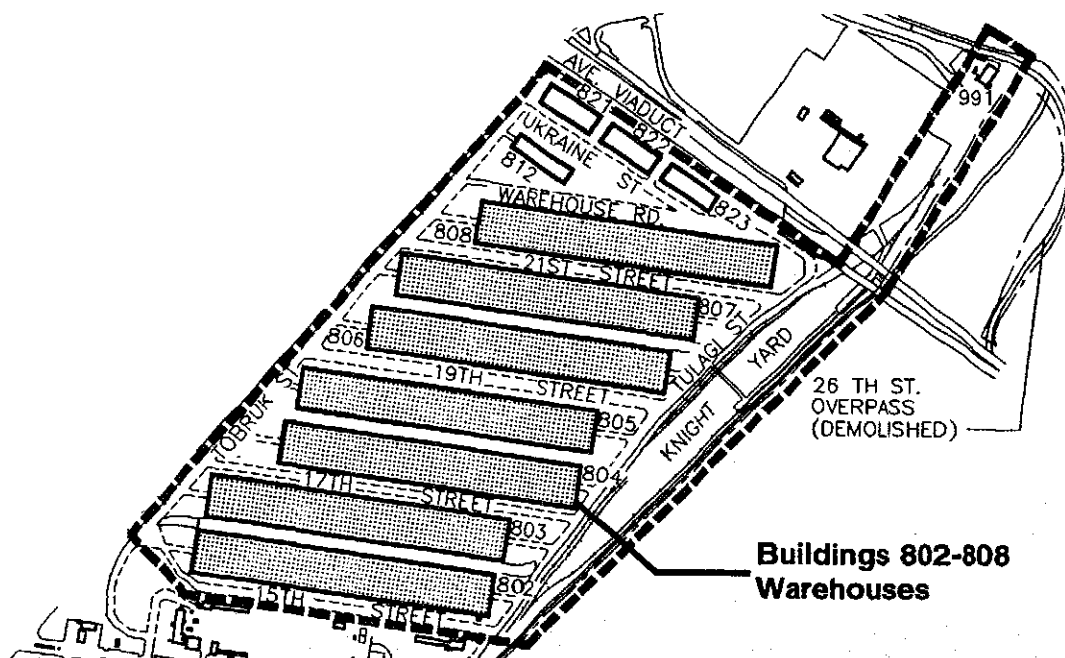
**Architect:** Bechtel-McCone-Parsons Corporation, Architect-Engineers, San Francisco, California.

**Contractor:** The prime contractor for this building was The Army Port Contractors, a joint venture of MacDonald & Kahn, Inc.; The Utah Construction Company; and W.A. Bechtel and Bechtel-McCone-Parsons Corporation. At least initially, some 600 black troops of the 394th Quartermaster Battalion helped in construction of the Installation. Additional subcontractors and suppliers consisted primarily of businesses in the San Francisco Bay area.

**Present Owner and Occupant:** Military Traffic Management Command, Western Area  
Oakland Army Base, CA 94626-5000

**Original Use:** Warehouses

**Present Use:** Warehouses



- Significance:** Buildings 802-808 played a vital role in the Installation's mission to resupply U.S. forces in the Pacific during both World War II and the Korean engagement. Matériel was shipped by rail and truck directly to OARB where it was processed and crated in these huge warehouses for shipment overseas.
- Original Plans:** Original plans were located in the OARB Engineering Office. All seven Warehouses were developed from a single set of drawings: #1-10-39, sheets 1 through 12. All sheets were accounted for except sheet #11.
- Alterations:** Building 805 experienced a fire within a few years following completion. Real Property Records indicate that the job to rebuild the damaged 43,560 square feet of warehouse space was completed in February 1946. Except for some modernization, renovation and repairs, the warehouses remain substantially unchanged.

## I. GENERAL STATEMENT

**Architectural Character.** These warehouse structures with their monitor bays and clerestory windows, are typical of the period.

**Condition of Fabric.** As a group, the warehouses are in average to good condition.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

**Overall Dimensions.** All seven warehouses are long rectilinear structures. Buildings 802-807 are 1298' x 180' and enclose 233,640 gross square feet. Building 808 has an identical footprint. However, a 1,400 square foot second floor office was added at a later date (*Photographs CA-125-I-1 through CA-125-I-4, and I-16*). All seven warehouses have two concrete platforms 1298' long x 12' wide, running the entire length of each side of the building. This adds 31,152 square feet to each warehouse.

**Foundations.** These buildings are founded on continuous concrete footing at perimeter walls and isolated spread footings at interior columns. Bays are 22' long x 32' wide except for the 22' x 52' central bays. The floors require periodic leveling due to differential settlement.

**Walls.** Exterior walls are wood stud frame with 1" x 6" painted horizontal wood siding over diagonal wood sheathing.

**Structural System.** The Warehouses are of heavy timber frame construction, with 6" x 8" timber columns supporting sawtooth-type wood trusses across the monitor bays and timber girders over the remainder of the roof. The roof is framed by wood purlins to support heavy wood decking.

**Porches, Stoops, Balconies.** Concrete platforms, 12 feet wide, run the entire length of both sides of each warehouse (*Photographs CA-125-I-5 and I-6*). One platform accommodates rail cars while the other is used for loading-unloading trucks. Both platforms are approximately 17'-9" above finished grade. The ends of platforms are

ramped to meet grade. Concrete steps provide access to the platform approximately one-third the distance from either end.

**Chimneys.** None.

**Openings.** Wood windows are used throughout each warehouse. The ground level and second story windows are arranged either singly or in pairs. The monitor windows provide light and ventilation to the center of the building. The south side clerestory windows have, however, been removed, and the spaces covered with translucent corrugated plastic panels, probably to reduce the interior temperature of the warehouses. Seventeen pairs of 7'-6" wide sliding wood doors are arranged along either side (*Photograph CA-125-I-7*). One pair provides access to the warehouse on either end. The doors are wood-framed with 1" x 6" diagonal sheathing, and slide along metal tracks at top and bottom.

**Roof.** The 2" wood roof deck is surfaced with built-up bituminous roofing.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

**Floor Plans.** The interior of the warehouses are partitioned across the width into five areas by fire walls and self-closing fire doors (*Photograph CA-125-J-8*). Each section is 12 bays long (264 feet) with the exception of the central section spanning only 11 bays (242 feet). The western most section includes three enclosed spaces: a 1408 square foot office in the northwestern corner (22' wide x 64' long); a 2400 square foot packing and crating room in the southwestern corner (37'-5" wide x 64' long); and an adjacent packing materials room of 1204 square feet (28' wide x 43' long). Building 808 has an additional 1400 square foot mezzanine level above the ground floor office, which was a later addition. Toilets of 210 square feet are provided in both the end sections of each warehouse. Access is either from the warehouse or from the truck platform outside.

**Stairways.** No interior stairways exist, with the exception of the one added to Building 808 to access the mezzanine level.

**Flooring.** The floor is a 6" asphaltic concrete slab pitched slightly to drain to either side of the building. The office area has a wood floor on 2" x 4" sleepers.

**Wall and Ceiling Finishes.** Interior walls and ceilings are unfinished with the exception of partitions which are surfaced with gypsum wallboard. The packing material room has gypsum board surfaces on the interior walls and ceiling, as do the administration areas and rest rooms.

**Openings.** Interior doors to partitioned rooms and the toilets are standard hollow core. Wood sash windows are provided in the office area.

**Decorative Features and Trims.** None.

**Hardware.** No notable hardware.

**Mechanical Equipment.** Gas fired warm air units, supplemented by electric space heaters, heat the office areas. Subsequent renovation of the bathrooms included the

installation of electric hot water heaters. Lighting is provided by overhead incandescent fixtures throughout the structures.

**Original Furnishings.** None.

#### **IV. SITE**

**General Setting and Orientation.** The Warehouses are appropriately located in the supply/storage land use area of the Installation. Easy access is available to the berthing areas on the opposite side of Maritime Street. Generally, land use activities surrounding the Warehouses are compatible.

**Historic Landscaping Design.** None.

**Outbuildings.** None.

#### **V. SOURCES**

**Architectural Drawings.** Real Property Records for Buildings 802-808 indicate that they were constructed from a single set of plans. These architectural drawings consist of twelve sheets from file number 1-10-39. Of these drawings, only sheet 11 is unaccounted for. Seven drawings have been reproduced and are included as a supplement to this survey.

**Early Views.** The contractor's "Completion Report" includes a photograph of the completed structure. The photograph is undated, however it would have to have been taken prior to the report's date of June 1, 1942 (*Photograph CA-125-12*).